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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-06 AID-07 PC-05 L4B-04 SIL-01
OMB-01 TRSE-00 DCT-02 /084 W

O R 302033Z OCT 80
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5606
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USCINCO QUARRY HTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINGSTON 8074

USCINCO FOR INTAFF

USCINCLANT FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: NA
TAGS: SOPN, PINT, JM
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER MANLEY'S PRESS CONFERENCE

1. PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY HELD A 45-MINUTE PRESS CONFERENCE AT JAMAICA HOUSE AT NOON, OCTOBER 30 FOR THE FOREIGN AND LOCAL PRESS. THE CONFERENCE WAS ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS MORNING AND WAS INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FOREIGN PRESS, WHO ATTENDED IN FORCE, INCLUDING ALL THREE U.S. TELEVISION NETWORKS. FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT OF MAJOR POINTS FROM THE NOTES OF A CORRESPONDENT WHO ATTENDED.

2. MANLEY OPENED BY NOTING THAT THIS IS THE FIRST ELECTION IN JAMAICA RUN BY AN ELECTORAL BODY IN WHICH BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES HAD EQUAL REPRESENTATION. HE NOTED THAT JAMAICA HAS A STRONG DEMOCRATIC TRADITION OF WHICH "WE ARE VERY PROUD." HE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE IS A TRADITION IN JAMAICAN POLITICS FOR THE OPPOSITION PARTY IF IT LOSES TO CRY FOUL, BUT HE SAID THE OPPOSITION COULD NOT DO THAT THIS ELECTION BECAUSE OF THE ELECTORAL REFORMS.

3. COMMENTING ON THE PROGRESS OF VOTING TODAY MANLEY SAID THAT OVERALL THE POLLING IS OFF TO A FAIRLY SMOOTH START, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS IN SOME AREAS. HE NOTED THAT IN A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS IN SOUTH MANCHESTER, VOTING HAD NOT YET STARTED. HOWEVER, HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ELECTORAL LAW HAD BEEN AMENDED NOT YEPYLONG AGO TO PERMIT ALL VOTERS WHO HAVE NOT YET VOTED AND ARE PRESENT AT THE POLLING STATION AT 5, WHEN THE POLLS OFFICIALLY CLOSE, TO STILL VOTE. THERE HAS BEEN A BREAKDOWN OF SECURITY IN CERTAIN AREAS, BUT THE SECURITY FORCES ARE DEALING WITH THIS. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE HEARD REPORTS OF SOME VOTERS BEING TOLD TO SHOW THEIR COMPLETED BALLOTS TO UNNAMED PERSONS BEFORE DEPOSITING THE BALLOT IN THE BALLOT BOX.

4. MANLEY DENIED A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA YESTERDAY REPORTEDLY CLAIMING THAT THE PNP IS TRYING TO SHOOT ITS WAY TO POWER. HE SAID SEAGA KNOWS VERY WELL THIS IS NOT TRUE AND HE QUESTIONED WHAT KIND OF ALIBI SEAGA WAS TRYING TO ESTABLISH. HE SAID THE OPPOSITION LEADER WAS BEHAVING IN A DISHONORABLE AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MANNER." MANLEY CLAIMED THAT THE PNP HAS BEEN THE TARGET OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE ATTACKS.

5. ASKED BOUT REORTS THAT AN ASSASSINATIOON ATTEMPT HAD OCCURRED ON SEAGA IN NANNYVILLE YESTERDAY, MANLEY SAID THIS WAS AN "HYSTERICAL PIECE OF NONSENSE" AND A "RATHER SINISTER BIT OF ROMANTICIZING." HE SAID THERE WERE MANY CASES OF SHOTS BEING FIRED IN THE AIR IN THE VICINITY OF CANDIDATES AND IF IT WAS AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON SEAGA YESTERDAY, THEN "I'LL MAKE CLAIM OF EIGHT OR NINE ON ME." HE IS CHECKING OUT A REPORT ON A SECURITY FORCE MEMBER REPORTEDLY SHOT IN THE LEG DURING THE NANNYVILLE INCIDENT.

6. ASKED ABOUT THE JUNE COUP ATTEMPT, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS NIPPED IN THE BUD BUT SAID THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT KNOW IF THEY HAVE THE COMPLETE STORY OR "ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG."

7. MANLEY SAID SEAGA HAS A REAL DILEMMA. HE HAS BEEN PREDICTING VICTORY FOR SO LONG THAT HE HAS TO COME UP WITH SOME SORT OF EXPLANATION IF HE DOESNT'T WIN BY A LARGE MAJORITY. MANLEY ADDED THAT HE EXPECTED THAT SEAGA HAD BEEN MAKING "CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL OVERTURES,"

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AND "HE SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF HIMSELF," ASKED IF HIS PARTY WILL ACCEPT A DEFEAT, HE SAID YES. IF WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ALL JAMAICANS HAD A CHANCE TO VOTE.

8. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THE SECURITY FORCES WOULD ACCEPT A PNP VICTORY HE SAID THAT SOME WOULD NOT BE TOO HAPPY BUT HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A RESULT.

9. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, HE SAID THAT THE SECURITY FORCES ARE CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH ANY POST ELECTION VIOLENCE HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SAY THAT HE WAS FEARFUL BUT IS CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER THE JLP WILL ACCEPT A PNP VICTORY.

10. ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON JAMAICA'S NATIONAL IMAGE, HE SAID OBVIOUSLY HAS A SENSE OF SADNESS BUT THE REAL TRAGEDY IS NOT THE EFFECT OF VIOLENCE ON WHAT THE OUTSIDE WORLD THINKS OF JAMAICA BUT WHAT JAMAICA THINKS OF ITSELF. HE SAID THAT STARTING TOMORROW, THERE MUST BE AN EFFORT TO REBUILD SOCIETY STARTING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

11. ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THERE IS A 30-30 SPLIT. HE SAID THAT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION THE GOVERNOR GENERAL SELECTS THE MAN WHOM HE THINKS MOST CAPABLE OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE POPULAR VOTE WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN, INTO ACCOUNT. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION OF HOW HE WOULD FEEL IF HE WAKES UP TOMORROW AND FINDS HIMSELF TO BE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT "FRANKLY I ALWAYS THOUGHT BEING LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION WAS A BORING JOB"
LAWRENCE

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